Also, an agreement for running Passenger Train Service between Sealdah and Jamuna Bridge was signed in 2001 and during the visit of Minister of External Affairs to Dhaka on February 19, 2007, Bangladesh agreed for early operationalisation of Sealdah (Kolkata)-Joydevpur (Dhaka) passenger train service. This was reiterated by both sides in the Inter-Governmental Railway Meeting held in Dhaka in March, 2007.

On 8th July, 2007, the Indian Team comprising officers from the concerned Ministries/Departments conducted a trial run of the passenger train. In the Inter-Governmental Meeting held on July 9-10, 2007 in Dhaka, both sides expressed their willingness to commence the commercial operation of the passenger train as early as possible subject to other relevant related concerns being addressed to mutual satisfaction. Bangladesh side also conducted their trial run service on July 29, 2007. However, regular traffic is yet to commence.

Setting up coach factory at Cherthala

2726. PROF P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have announced setting up of a coach factory at Cherthala in Kerala,

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken in this regard; and

(d) by when the unit would commence its operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NARANBHAI RATHWA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Rail projects for the North East Region

2727. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of rail projects proposed for the North East Region during the Eleventh Plan period; and

(b) whether solid plans have been made for the success of the same so that it doesn't meet the fate of Bogibeel project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) and (b) There is no such specific plan for inclusion of new works in North East Region during Eleventh Plan. The Plan document is not yet finalized.

Plan to provide more facilities in railway colonies

†2728. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to give more facilities to railway colonies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Government are aware that the several colonies and houses like Tindharia of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railways do not have the proper facilities like water, marmati, passages, toilets etc.; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Railways always endeavour to provide and maintain required facilities in the quarters and colonies as per entitlement of the employees. However required facilities may not be available in some quarters/colonies.

(c) and (d) Corporate Welfare Plan for 10 years at a cost of Rs. 5000 crore has also been approved to pay special attention towards maintenance and improvement of staff quarters with particular emphasis on substandard quarters lacking basic amenities and replacement of old and dilapidated quarters on Railways. In the current year sanctions have been given for additional works of Rs. 344 crore. At Tindharia, there are 16 numbers of quarters in which proper toilet facility is not available. However, water supply arrangement is available there. The occupants of these 16 quarters are being shifted to other vacant quarters, wherein all amenities are available.

Recommendations of National Transport Policy Committee

2729.SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the main recommendations of the National Transport Policy Committee (Pande Committee) in regard to enhancing of speed of freight trains;

(b) whether Government have considered the proposals;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) National Transport Policy Committee observed that the speed differential between the mail/express and freight trains adversely affects the line capacity utilization. The committee felt that if freight trains could be run at speeds of 90 KMPH it will reduce turnaround time and wagon requirement. Investment in wagon design and tracks structure will help in improving rail efficiency and prove to be economical in the long run.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Indian Railways have improved the tracks structure and designed new wagons which has enabled running of some freight trains at 100 KMPH.

(d) Does not arise.